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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

AN ARTISTIC HOME.

BY HELEN ANDERSON.

MR. D. O. MILLS' FIFTH AVENUE RESIDENCE.



O much has been written in the last few years, and so many descriptions given of the Vanderbilt houses, that many lose sight of the fact, that these houses are not our only specimens of fine interior decoration. There are a number of houses in New York City, whose less pretentious exteriors, hide interiors that on a much smaller scale are quite as novel in designs and exquisite in finish as the Vanderbilt houses, where the originality of the idea, and the beauty of workmanship, are some-

what lost in the vastness of the whole creation.

Probably there is not a more beautiful house in this city, or in any other, than that of Mr. D. O. Mills, on Fifth Avenue, opposite the cathedral. Mr. Mills' house was finished before the Vanderbilt houses, and was one of the first in the city in which full scope was given to the artistic taste and originality of the decorator. The exterior being in the conventional New York style, does not prepare one for the almost oriental splendor that with all its eastern magnificence of coloring, seems to blend and harmonize, until it is a suggestion of the Orient, subdued or refined. The entrance hall is in the early English style, the wood work of English oak, carved in the richest manner, wonderfully beautiful in design and workmanship. To the right of the ante-hall is the reception room, and to the left the library. The drawing room is entered from the right of the hall, and to the left of the foyer hall commences the winding staircase.

Next to the door of the reception room is placed the hall stand, of English oak, richly carved, which, like most of the carving in this house is apt to be passed by at a first glance by the ordinary observer, but one is well repaid in giving a closer examination which reveals the almost absolute perfection of the work. Opposite the hall-stand in a corresponding space stand two hall chairs, covered with Scutari rugs, and over them hangs one of Schreyers' famous paintings. The frieze in the hall is about two feet deep, and made of rough plaster, with round tiles of several sizes sunken into the plaster at irregular intervals. This is not to be confounded with the scratched paint one sees so much of. This is actually rough plaster, and odd as it may sound in a description, is in no way rough or startling in effect.

The ceiling is of wood, constructed with heavy beams and panelled; the corbels elaborately carved. The wall is wainscoted to the frieze line, very simple in construction with the exception of the upper member of the cornice where is displayed a rather nice bit of carving.

The ante-hall is divided from the foyer hall by hangings of old Indian embroideries, over which is a carved screen of English oak and stained glass, so that when the portieres are drawn the foyer hall is lighted by the ante-hall from above. On either side of the portieres are bronze figures of War and Peace, by Barbedienne, of Paris. They stand upon pedestals of alps-green marble, with dark, carved onyx capitals.

The reception room which is entered from the right of the ante-hall is purely Moorish. The wood-work is of ebonyed oak inlaid with brass and mother-of-pearl. The wainscoting is about three feet six inches high, and the walls of crimson plush with embroidered band hanging from the line of the frieze.

Between the wall covering and the frieze are placed glazed tiles of blue and yellow. This tiling is most happy in effect, though blue and yellow suggest a cold, hard, or crude appearance, but one can hardly pass through this room without realizing how much of the Moorish effect is due to these tiles. The tiling is flanked on either side, by strips of black wood, the lower one acting as picture moulding. At intervals over the tiling and in the corners of the room, are Moorish brackets. The wood-work of these brackets is carved in that delicate and fanciful style that is characteristic of the Moorish work. The chairs and divans in this room are covered with embroideries of gold and silver thread upon a black velvet ground. So unique are these coverings that only one was found in this country at Tiffany's, two in London, and the rest in Paris. The mantel is flanked on either side by cushioned divans, and in the opposite wall space is a large cabinet richly inlaid with brass and mother-of-pearl. The upright piano is also ebonyed oak inlaid to cor-

respond. The ceiling is in plaster extremely Moorish in design and coloring. Four jeweled lamps, hanging by linked chains light the room.

The drawing-room is in gold and ivory, the walls covered with old rose lampas, with a floral design in gold thread. A feature of this room is the frieze painted by Messerole—the subject, a series of figures gracefully arranged and adapting themselves to the irregularities of the frieze. The mantel is at the right hand side as you enter from the reception room. The inner mantel is of onyx with carved onyx columns on either side, the upper structure of wood-work to correspond with the room. The ceiling is of moulded plaster in white and gold.

The furniture coverings are of hat plush in dull gold embroidered. Opposite the mantel has been successfully solved the problem that presents itself in most New York houses—a long wall space. This has been accomplished by the use of a divan, with two cabinets of about eighteen inches square each, connected over the back of the divan by a series of small mirrors; thus making a large but graceful piece of furniture. The room is lighted with twelve sconces. The design consists of a semi circle of jeweled glass, with a mirror at the back. The sconces are finished at the base with a fine flagree work of silver and gold. Above the band of glass jewels are delicate sprays of gold, that merely suggest ornamentation, but are really part of the lighting apparatus. The feature of omitting the chandelier from the room is much to be desired. By so doing an uninterrupted view of ceiling and room is obtained which is otherwise rendered impossible.

The dining-room is at the end of the hall, and is in old English oak. This room probably shows one of the finest specimens of wood-carving in the city. The hangings in the room are embroidered in what might be termed gobelins embroideries, the chair coverings are of old gobelins tapestry. As an economy of space the sideboard is fitted flush with the wall, having been recessed into the butler's pantry.

The library is fitted in San Domingo mahogany, and is wainscoted to the frieze and carved in the Italian renaissance, which prevents what might have been an almost too woolly effect. The frieze is painted upon canvas with a gold ground representing the sciences by cupid-like figures. The book-cases are noticeable for the amount of ornamentation (carving), and are carried round the room without a break of any kind. This is the most effective room in the house, and one that it is impossible to do justice to with pen and ink. In fact it is almost useless to attempt to give a truthful conception of such an interior. Perhaps the greater proof of the perfect artistic taste used is that nothing startles the eye. Everything seems to have grown into the right place. I know of no words that express it so well as Owen Meredith does, when he speaks of that "fine art that so artfully all things conceal."

I use the term perfect artistic taste, knowing that artistic taste as a usual thing is perfect only in the imagination, but in this case artistic ideas are used with perfect results, and a total disregard of that æsthetic Grosvenor Gallery style, that is so often linked in the public mind as a term synonymous with artistic taste.

OUR method for inside gilding of glass is this: After making the glass perfectly clean on the inside, sketch on the outside your letters and scroll work with chalk, crayon or hard soap. Then with a sable pencil outline the letters on the inside with gold size mixed with a very little boiled oil. When this dries to the proper tack, use water size and gild over the letters and cover your outlines; when dry, you will have for a backing a distinct outline of dead gold, which does not injure the appearance of the work from the outside. For backing use asphaltum and when dry give a coat of body varnish extending beyond the outlines of the letters and ornament at least one-eighth or one-fourth of an inch.

THE mahogany used in the best furniture now chiefly comes from Mexico. That of Cuba, almost equally as good, is not of sufficient size for upholstery purposes. St. Domingo now supplies but little, and this soft slight grained and characterless; no further supplies come from Honduras, the best growths of which were long since exhausted. The facilities now provided for producing Mexican mahogany to lumber, place it nearly on a par as to cost with our choicest home hardwood. This mahogany is characterised by warmth and richness in tone, beauty of surface and durability.

THE finest interior art effects as to color appear to be obtained where this is of middle depth. Deep hues are apt to impart a sombre effect, and about a very light room there is a want of that snugness and repose in the absence of which the highest art effects cannot exist. Yet it is not necessary that all rooms be of equal depth.